

# SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

BROUGHT DOWN AND RAISED UP AGAIN.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS.

"Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against."—LUKE ii. 34.

WHEN the Lord was about to bring the flood upon the earth, he had ordered that some of every kind of beasts of the earth should enter into the ark. They, therefore, by that instinct which the Lord pressed upon them, left their native condition, and sought the ark; when they arrived there they were impressed by a discriminating sort of instinct, by which they distinguished Noah from all other men, and by thus distinguishing him they entered the ark and were safe. And that this has a spiritual and typical meaning none of us can doubt. Think not that I am going too far in thus making man to be spiritually as unable to discern spiritual things as the irrational creation is unable to reason as man reasons. Hence the Lord saith of his people after the flesh, that "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

So here in the case before us; Simeon by the grace of God was a just man, a believer in Christ, and made acquainted with that mediatorial work which was not yet wrought; and this knowledge of his justification before God made him a devout man; it devoted him to God, as is always the case; when a man is thus blessed he is sure to be solemnly and earnestly devoted to the God of his eternal salvation. Now Simeon was favoured with a divine revelation; probably he had been fearing death, as all of us do more or less at times, some more than others; it was revealed to him that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. And so he came by the Spirit into the temple, and by that Spirit discerned that this child was the Son of God, the Christ of God. Simeon saw here his own eternal safety, and

peace flowed into his soul, which made him say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." And Simeon doth not forget others; he sees that this salvation to be achieved by this Person was to be for the Gentile as well as for the Jewish world,—“a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Now just as no man then did clearly and spiritually apprehend, realize, and know that this was the Christ of God, except those who were taught of the Spirit of God, just so it is now; there is no man that can distinguish the true gospel of God—for the gospel is the representative of Christ on earth,—from other gospels, but that man that is taught by the Spirit of the living God. And as it was a matter essential to Simeon's salvation that he should distinguish who was the true Christ, that he should have this knowledge and recognition of the true Christ; so it is essential to us that we should receive the true gospel of the grace of God, and that we should receive it rightly; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Let the true gospel of God be in ever so small a measure perverted, it then ceases to be the gospel of God, God owns it no longer. Just distort it, take one part of it away, and put something of human device into the place thereof, it at once ceases to be the gospel of God. He will not have a tach, a loop, or a thread altered in the tabernacle; the true church is to be built as in the days of old. It is said of Christ that “he shall raise up the tabernacle of David,”—that is, the church,—“and close up the breaches thereof” by his wonderful life and death, “and raise up his ruins, and build it as in the days of old.” The tabernacle in the wilderness had not one particle of human device in it; again and again the Lord said to Moses, “See that thou make it according to the pattern shewn unto thee in the mount.” And this tabernacle or dwelling is a type here of the church of the blessed God, and that church is to be built up without one particle of human device in it; the life which the soul is to have is of God; the holiness, the righteousness, in a word, as the apostle says, “all these things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ.” Simeon also saw that thousands would be left in their native blindness, and live and die enemies to this holy child Jesus.

I at once proceed to notice three things that our text presents. First, *the submission*,—“This child is set for the fall; that is, the submission, to bring people into submission to God. Secondly, *the exaltation*,—“and rising again of many in Israel.” Thirdly, *the opposition*,—“a sign which shall be spoken against.”

First, *the submission*,—“This child is set for the fall.” Now, to show that this is the meaning, we may just refer to several scriptures; but take one circumstance, that of Saul of Tarsus. You



observe there that it was by the power of Christ that that man fell ; but it was a fall not into sin, but out of sin into salvation ; it was not a fall into God's wrath, but a fall out of his wrath into his mercy ; it was not a fall out of God's truth into error, but a fall out of himself into the kingdom of God. It is a subject of infinite importance that we enter upon—namely, that of being brought down by the Lord Jesus Christ. For if we are not brought down by the power of Christ, our religion wants a root ; there is no foundation in it. “ He shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath ; he shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies.” Now to strike through here certainly means to kill ; that is the idea, I think, there intended ; as it goes on to say, “ He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies.” Now the meaning is this—that here is that conviction that enters into the soul, that makes you see and feel that nothing but the mercy of God, and in the Lord's own time you will see and feel that nothing but the atonement and righteousness of Christ, can deliver you from the state you are in ; and you will be completely dead to all hope of helping yourself. Now let me look narrowly into this matter. First, you will be dead, if the conviction is real, to all hope of justification in whole or in part by the works of the law ; you will, as experience will teach you, arrive at this conclusion that the law is spiritual, holy, just, and good ; but that you are carnal, unholy, unjust, and evil, and sold under sin ; and that you will therefore be completely dead to the least hope whatever of helping yourself in relation to the law of God. These are what are there called dead bodies. “ He shall judge among the heathen,” that is, the Gentile world ; the soul is thus brought under judgment ; you will see that by the law, according to the law, you are thus dead, and dead to all hope of being able in whole or in part to help yourself. And his judgment is, and your judgment will accord with it, “ Without me ye can do nothing.” You will set your seal to this. And thus he smites you down ; as it saith in another place, “ Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee ;” and you will thus feel your helplessness, thus be brought down. Let me again refer to Saul of Tarsus ; what could Saul of Tarsus do when he was brought down ? I admit that his experience was greater, and the circumstances more conspicuous ; but the kind of teaching was the same ; because the Lord brings down every one that he is the teacher of to feel what poor helpless creatures they are. But when the Lord sent Ananias,—that is it ; when the Lord sends the messenger, sends this message, brings home the word with power, reveals to him eternal election with power,—electing grace took hold of him, the good will of God took



hold of him, that Just One took hold of him, pardoning mercy took hold of him ; then, by that same power that brought him down, he did now realize pardon, and liberty, and peace, and joy. And I can tell you this, if you are taught of God this will be the experience in which you will be led to know your helplessness in this sense of the word also. "Thou," saith David, "art my glory, and the lifter up of mine head." My Bible tells me, and my experience has solemnly told me the same thing, that no man can receive anything, either peace, or pardon, or liberty, or the promise, or Christ, or anything else, except it be given him from above. Happy the man that thus feels that he is a prisoner of hope ; that he is as helpless pertaining to the gospel as to the law. When God brings a man down, he keeps him down as long as he pleases. Hence said one of old, "Thine hand presseth me sore." When the Lord shuts up a man in prison, he shuts him up as long as he pleases ; when the Lord is pleased to suffer Satan to come in like a flood, he suffers Satan to stand at Joshua's right hand just as long as the Lord pleaseth ; so that he will teach us thus his sovereignty, that the Holy Spirit giveth to each man severally as he will. There is not only, then, the error of a mere mental reception of the promises ; not only the error of a mere fanciful and mental coming to Christ ; not only the mere logical conclusion, without the power of the eternal Spirit, that you are a Christian ; but there is another error which I would wish carefully to guard against ; an error not perhaps very popular, but still it is an error that I have met with ; and it is this,—people get a kind of vague idea of their sinnership ; they are perpetually hearing it preached, perhaps hearing it talked about ; and a vague idea of the gospel plan of salvation, and a kind of distant idea that they can do nothing, and that they therefore will wait contentedly until the Lord shall reveal his love with power. And these persons that I am now referring to do wait contentedly, quite contentedly ; no uneasiness, no unhappiness. Well, how are you going on ? Oh, waiting the Lord's appointed time. Quite easy, quite comfortable, and generally speaking as worldly, and as frivolous, and as carnal, as they are easy. Well now, you, if I am speaking to any such, are deceiving your own soul ; you are not a prisoner, for if you were really in prison, that imprisonment would be a very dull, trying, dispiriting experience to you ; but you haven't this dulness and dispiritedness, you are not shut up as a prisoner, for if so, your loathsome condition as an unpardoned, unsanctified sinner would be a burden to you, and you would say as the prophet did, "Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." If the Lord had wounded you, and brought you down, in order to heal



you and to raise you up, that wound would be felt, you would be uneasy, you would be unhappy, and your daily language more or less would be, "O Lord, how long, how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? O Lord, when wilt thou come unto me?" That, if the work be real, will be your experience and your cry. And David saith, "Bring my soul out of prison." The Saviour saith, "I open, and none can shut; and I shut, and none can open;" and it is his very work to set the prisoners free. And you may depend upon it the deeper and the more gloomy the pit is that the soul is in, the more unhappy it will be; and it cannot get out of that pit, out of the miry clay, out of its horrors, out of its condemned state, even by the blood of the everlasting covenant, until God himself comes in, and by the work of the eternal Spirit lifts the soul out of it into the liberty of the gospel. "As for thee also, I have sent forth"—not that I told them of the blood of the everlasting covenant, and so they came out; but "I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water." I believe the religion of thousands in our day consisteth of Satan going out of their souls of his own accord, and he takes the key of their hearts with him, and returns afterwards to assimilate himself to whatever shape or form that man adopts. The man becomes religious. Ah, says the devil, I must just see what he will settle down in. If he become a Puseyite, the devil goes down to the den, and he says, "There's that man turned Puseyite: I want a Puseyite spirit; will you go and be a Puseyite spirit in that man?" Yes; and he comes. If the man turn Papist, he says, "I want a Papist spirit; will you go and be a Papist spirit in that man?" Yes. Or if the man turn free-willer; "I want a free-will spirit: will you go and be a free-will spirit in that man?" Yes, I will. Or if the man adopt duty-faith; anything to keep up the enmity of the mind against the liberty of the gospel—"Will you go and be a duty-faith spirit in that man?" Yes. Perhaps a sound Calvinist in the head, but at the same time as much at home in profligacy and in an ungodly world, perhaps more so, than they are in the assemblies of the saints or the service of God. The devil says, "Will you go and be the unclean spirit in that man? keep his head clear, but let his heart be filled with the very dregs of hell;" and thus the man professes doctrines with his head, while his heart is where every natural man's heart is, in that that belongs to Satan; and though I thus speak, I am persuaded that *real* Antinomians are very few; for myself, I have never yet met with *one* who answers to the description given by free-will and duty-faith advocates. Have you not read such a scripture as this?—"Now therefore the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets." Satan transforms himself into

an angel of light; and whatever your religion is, if it be a false religion, he will assimilate himself to it; he will inspire your zeal, he will inspire your prayers, he will inspire you in your doings, taking good care to keep up an idea that you can do something, and to keep up an idea in your mind that this liberty of the gospel is a dangerous sort of thing. Now I am speaking this morning very likely to some who are thus possessed of a religious devil;—just ask yourself this question, What is the class of minister above all ministers among Protestants that you dislike? You know that it's the high-doctrine one; you know it's the *hyper*; you go to hear them sometimes, but you cannot like them; you know you hate them, you know you detest them. And if any one is in your company who speaks well of one of these men, you know it so grieves you, so grates upon your feelings, that you will fabricate a lie against him, if you have no other means of doing it, in order to lower him in the estimation of those present. Hence it was with the Saviour when one said, "He is a good man." "Yes, but he deceiveth the people;" so that if there were a few to speak well of him, there were a great many to speak otherwise. Then let us look into the matter: we profess to be Christians; has the word of God pierced us through and through? are we dead to the law? have we learned our helplessness also in gospel matters as well as in legal matters? and have we felt that we are as unable to come to Christ and take the promises as we are to fulfil the law? and at the same time do we know what it is to wait prayerfully and earnestly, to seek constantly, and not to rest nor be content until we are raised by the power of the eternal Spirit, or made to feel and to know something of the blessedness described in the thirty-second Psalm,— "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works." Men may despise experience, and despise the work of the Holy Spirit in order to keep their Dagon upon its legs, and in order to keep up an evil feeling towards the real liberty of the gospel. "This child," then, "is set for the fall." So it was when Jesus, the holy child Jesus, ascended his throne; see on the day of Pentecost thousands fell before him; and from that day to this his arrows have been sharp in the hearts of his enemies. All of us by nature are enemies; he thus brings us down into the dust, and, as it were, on to the dunghill; and, instead of our being kings, and something of importance and value, we see ourselves spiritually as a man would literally upon a dunghill, very beggars upon a dunghill; degraded, as filthy and guilty as it is possible for such poor worms to be; and such will indeed say in prospect, If ever the happy time should come for me to realize mercy,—



"If I lisp a song of praise,  
Each note shall echo, Grace, free grace."

Be not content without this. But, saith one, I am afraid I have not this experience. Then pray God to lead you into it; what you see not, pray God to give you. Never mind how trying; never mind how much you may be discouraged; by and by, when you get through the fire and through the water out into a wealthy place, you will then say, I would not have been without that chastisement, that wounding, that trouble, for all the world. I know now what I never could have known before; now I know why those men contended so earnestly for the perfection of the Saviour, the certainty of his truth, the amplitude of his mercy, the sufficiency of his grace, the immutability of God's counsel; now I can understand the whole of it. And you will side with them to renounce everything of a creature kind, and glory in the Lord alone. Thus, then, by him some of us have been brought down.

But my text saith, "For the rising again." Yes; the man that's thus brought down, he shall rise again. The man that's brought down as the rich man was, into hell, shall not rise again; the man that apostatizes from God's truth, and dies in that state, he shall not rise again. But of those that fall under him in the sense I have stated, it is said, "The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all them that be bowed down." Let us now see what they are raised up into; it must be by Jesus Christ, for he is set for the rising. First, then, let it be peace. And that is a good thing,—to have peace, you know; the best thing in the world true peace is. Yes, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." The word Shiloh means *peace*, and means *abundance*, or *plenty*; and so by Jesus Christ we are raised up,—for "the vision is for an appointed time," the Lord's own time; brought into peace that passeth understanding, sin forgiven and forgotten, put away, hidden, never to be named. You have nothing before you but peace to live in, in Christ with God; you have nothing in a dying hour but peace with God; you have nothing at the last great rising day but peace with God; you have nothing to all eternity but peace. "Mark the perfect man," the man perfect in Christ; "behold the upright" in the faith; "the end of that man is peace." "To him," to this Shiloh, this peace, "shall the gathering of the people be." But there is one important part here that I must dwell upon carefully; "*This child.*" Now Jesus Christ was a holy child, inherently holy. That which is inherently holy is incorruptible; that which is formally holy is not incorruptible. Hence the difference between inherent holiness and formal holiness. Formal holiness is a great thing, espe-

cially when it ariseth from inherent holiness. But Jesus Christ of course possessed them both; he was inherently holy, in him was no sin: "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;" and therefore he was, in consequence of this, incorruptible. Now the tabernacle in the wilderness was called holy; the temple of Solomon was called holy; but there was no inherent holiness in the materials of that tabernacle and of that temple. The materials were put to a holy use, but there was no inherent incorruptibility in them, and therefore those materials would corrupt and come to nought, notwithstanding their formal holiness, the holy use to which they were put. But Jesus Christ was inherently holy, and therefore incorruptible. Now our bodies have no inherent holiness; there is no holiness in your body, it is full of sin, and not holiness; it is full of unrighteousness, not righteousness; "The transgression of the wicked," saith David, "saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." There is no inherent holiness in the body; yet we are to present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service." But then it can be only formal holiness; there is no inherent holiness in the body of the believer, any more than there was in the gold, and wood, and stone, as the formal materials of the temple; but then their want of inherent holiness did not hinder their being put to a holy use; so with the body sanctified to God, and put to a holy use; but there is no inherent holiness in it. Well, say you, what do you mean by all this? I mean this; my text speaks of Christ raising us up; now it must be by his holiness that he raiseth us up. Now Jesus Christ, then, was inherently holy, and in every way holy; his body and soul were both inherently holy, and of course practically holy. Well, now, the Christian has no inherent holiness in the body; but we rejoice at the thought, that while this is the case, and the body must corrupt and die, being mortal, yet in the soul things are very different. "Born again of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever." Here, then, the Christian hath in his spirit inherent holiness. What means that thirst you have for the mercy of God, for the presence of God, for the promise of God, for the grace of God, for the Christ of God, for the salvation of God? What means that earnest desire that in hearing the word you may be favoured to mix faith therewith, and be profited? What meaneth that willing turning away from things that are vain, empty, and do not profit, unto those things that do profit? What meaneth your feeling when you can say, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord;" what is this? This is inherent holiness; here is a holy life in the soul, producing holy faith, holy prayers, holy love,



holy longings, and uniting you to a holy object,—namely, God himself. So that these people are spiritually incorruptible. The Christian can never become corrupt; he may have, as all have, more or less, their faults, some in one shape, and some in another; but nevertheless, there is no corruption can get between the believer and God. Hence it is, then, that being born of God, it unites us to Christ in his purity; his blood-cleansing from all sin, and his righteousness justifying from all things, we are hereby raised up into fellowship with God; we are hereby raised up as high, I was going to say, as Christ himself, for he hath said, “Where I am, there shall ye be also:” to sit together in heavenly places by Christ Jesus the Lord. And observe that this rising again is by this holy child, that is, by the Lord Jesus Christ in his holiness. I have often said, and I say it again, that *holiness* is a word, taking the proper inherent meaning of it, not in the mere formal sense, but taking its proper inherent meaning, is a word that will explain a great many things. Take, for instance, the scripture I have just referred to; it is said of this Shiloh, that “his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk;” both of which convey the idea of gladness and incorruptibility; there is no corruptibility. So in Solomon’s Song, whatever you read there of the church, the word *holiness* will explain the whole of it; and what you read there of Jesus Christ, the idea of holiness will explain the whole of it. When it is said of him that he is “white and ruddy,” it conveys a contrast to mortality; in a word, all the things that are there said of him, the idea of holiness explains the whole. That is the secret of the excellency of his life; that is the secret of the excellency of his death; that is the secret of his resurrection, for he is “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;” “Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;” it is the secret of the whole of it. And then, when we remember that he was God as well as man, and God and man in one person, he was not only inherently holy, but infallibly so. It was not possible for the manhood of Christ to sin. If Christ had been man, and only man, he would have been as liable to sin or to fall as the first Adam was; but then Jesus Christ was God as well as man; and he was not two persons, he was but one person; and therefore for him to be defiled was literally impossible. And you that are one with Jesus Christ, it is impossible for you ever to have any fault laid to your charge; you are viewed in his infallibility, and in his infallible righteousness, in his infallible perfection; here lies the whole secret, “Complete in him; accepted in him; boldness by the blood of Jesus to enter into the holy of holies.” Give up the personal deity of the Saviour, you give up everything; give up

the doctrine of the impossibility of sin in Christ, you would give up everything, because if he were fallible anywhere, or in any one respect, then in whatever respect he is fallible our religion is fallible; thus we should have no certainty in anything. But, bless the Lord, it is by him, then, that we rise above sin; we can look down at it, and see it is gone; we rise above the world, we can look down at it, and see it is a busy nothing; rise above the law, can look down at it, and see it is buried in the ark, not above, but under and wholly beneath the mercy-seat, mercy rejoicing against judgment; we can look at death, and see it swallowed up in victory; we can look at hell, and see it closed against us; we can look at an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, and see it reserved for us.

Now our text says, "And for a sign which shall be spoken against." I will give simply four out of the many reasons that may be assigned why men speak against Christ; not against a Christ of their own making; it is not direct against God that men speak as a general rule, but against God in the speciality of his sovereignty; it is not against Christ as a general rule now that men speak, but against Christ in the true order of his eternal priesthood; here it is he is spoken against. There are four reasons why they speak against him; that is, as the true Christ of God. The first is ignorance, men not knowing their need of him; many of the relations he bears therefore appear to the natural man to be superfluous; the sovereignty of God appears to be superfluous, and a sworn covenant ordered in all things and sure appears superfluous to the natural man: he does not know his need, and therefore speaks against it in ignorance. The second is the native enmity of the mind. Oh, Satan has got us tight there, has he not? He's the enemy of God, and the enemy of our souls, and inspires us all, while under his power, with enmity against God,—“the carnal mind is enmity against God;” men will naturally speak against that that they have an antipathy to. The third reason is because they are too much taken up with the world, and they do not like to be interrupted. Now we must pursue the world, must enjoy the world; to become one of these religious mopes would be to spoil all our pleasures. Thus they have an idea that there is something very gloomy about religion, and so they speak against it, especially the truth. The fourth and last reason I name, and a very solemn one it is, is this,—the natural man has a vague idea that the threatenings of God are mere words; that “whoever the Lord may send to hell,” says the natural man, “I can't believe he will send me there; whoever may be found on his left hand at the last day, I can't think that I shall be there; to whomsoever he may say, ‘Depart, ye cursed,



into everlasting fire,' I cannot think he will say it to me; for if he say such to me, then what must become of some?" Ah, you are not such a sinner as your neighbour, no. Do you know how that is? Because you do not sin in the same way. Perhaps you are as covetous as the devil, and he is a drunkard. Your covetousness, of course you are enabled to be decent with it; you pocket your money, and love your money, and worship your money; people say "Very nice man, very nice man;" except the poor and needy, I do not know what they say about you. Your neighbour, he gets a drop too much sometimes, and he is a dreadful sinner; if you should not go to heaven, what will become of your neighbour? Now you would not believe you are as bad as your neighbour, would you? You are ten times worse; covetousness is idolatry. God has made you a steward, and instead of your ministering to the poor, and doing the good you ought to do, you monopolize the whole of it, keep the whole of it, hoard it up. But you cannot keep it long; by and by will come the command to depart from this world, and God will say to such, "Thou mayest be no longer steward," you must give it all up now; and sometimes scattered to the four winds. How many instances have I seen of the fulfilment of that scripture, "He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them!" So it is, I say, you think your neighbour is a greater sinner than you, because he sins in a different way. Now you go and hear that drunkard, he would say, "Well, I do get a drop too much sometimes; but as to my neighbour and his wife, both of them, they are a pair of such covetous wretches; I don't think God will be likely to punish me for getting a little too much now and then; depend upon it that's nothing in comparison with their unnatural covetousness; I do give to the poor sometimes." So you will always find that each man has a word to say in his own favour; if you were to go among the thieves of London, each would have something to say in his own favour. Thus, then, men by nature speak against the gospel of the blessed God. May the Lord lead us, those of us that he hath brought into a right spirit, to bless his holy name for bringing us down, and keeping us there until by his mercy we were raised up into the liberty of the everlasting gospel.

What shall I say upon the *final preservation*? I have a great many circumstances in my mind, but can mention only one or two. Joseph was established in the revelation God made to him, and fell not; but abode with God and prevailed with God. Moses made a mistake, certainly—slew the Egyptian, and ran away from Pharaoh and from Egypt; but he did not run away from God's truth, he did not run away from Zion. David never left God's truth; he abode by it, lived in it, and no man ever died more triumphantly than he did.

The rains descended on poor Mordecai and upon the Jews, and beat upon that house; the floods rose and the winds blew. But who was it fell? Not Mordecai, but Haman. A terrible storm came down upon the three worthies, but who was it fell—those that were cast into the furnace, or those that cast them in? A terrible storm came down upon Daniel, but who was slain—those that cast him into the lions' den, or he himself? And all the saints of God that ever have been slain, their being slain did not hurt them. The Saviour says, "Nothing shall by any means hurt you." If you could see the saints in heaven now, and were to ask them, Did not those fires hurt you?—No, not in the least, we are none the worse for it; not so much as the smell of fire upon us. You see, our coats are not changed; our new covenant coat is still the same; our coat of consolation is still the same. The final preservation of the saints is sure. In the eleventh of Hebrews the apostle does not admit that one of them was finally lost. "These all died in faith." Heavy storms beat upon them, the waves of tribulation rose around them, the winds of persecution blew most mightily against them; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, in deserts, in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth; of whom the world was not worthy; but "these all died in faith." But if I am not a receiver of Christ, and am not decided for him, then I shall be like the man that built his house upon a wrong foundation—I must come to nought at last. Remember, friends, that you may build your hope upon a Jesus Christ, and be a professor, and like a gospel, and yet that may not be God's Christ. That is a remarkable scripture in 2 Corinthians xi.—"If he that cometh preacheth *another* Jesus;"—the same Jesus nominally, but they make out his salvation to be conditional, and that is not God's Christ; "or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received"—a spirit of legality from which the apostle stood clear,—that is not his spirit; his spirit is the spirit of adoption, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of dear relationship, the spirit of the Father; "or another gospel, which ye have not accepted,"—the same gospel in the letter, but it has been turned and twisted about, and it is a false gospel. How many will thus be deceived God alone knows. Oh, it is a mercy to be undeceived, and to be the subject of all that soul-discipline, from time to time, that shall make us see that we are built, not with the hay, wood, and stubble of creature duties and doings, but that we are built with gold, and silver, and precious stones—the precious promises of the blessed God; and building our hope upon the Rock of Ages as a matter of necessity, understanding what we are built upon, understanding and sincerely loving what we believe, and abiding thereby. Amen.